



## **NEWS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** November 8, 2018

**CONTACT:** Walter Wallace, 415-519.4628

### **Due to heavy smoke from the Butte County fire a Winter Spare the Air Alert is being called tonight through Friday November 9**

*Use of wood-burning devices is prohibited*

**SAN FRANCISCO** – Due to heavy smoke blowing into the Bay Area from the Camp Fire in Butte County, the Air District is issuing a Winter Spare the Air Alert starting tonight, Thursday, November 8, through Friday, November 9.

Burning wood, including manufactured fire logs or any other solid fuel, indoors or outdoors, is banned during this Winter Spare the Air Alert.

Heavy smoke from the Camp Fire in Butte County is causing very elevated levels of particulate pollution in the region, especially in the North and East Bay. A high-pressure system in place over Northern California and northeasterly winds are quickly moving smoke into the region and trapping it at the ground level, causing significant air quality impacts.

“Air quality throughout the Bay Area and especially in the North Bay is being heavily impacted by smoke from the fire in Butte County and use of fireplaces tonight and tomorrow will make air quality conditions worse,” said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Bay Area Air District. “To ensure we don’t add to the already smoke-filled air, it is critical to heed this Winter Spare the Air Alert by not burning wood and further contributing to the wildfire smoke in the Bay Area.”

It is illegal for Bay Area residents and businesses to use their fireplaces, woodstoves, pellet stoves, outdoor fire pits or any other wood-burning devices during a Winter Spare the Air Alert. Exemptions are available for homes without permanently installed heating, where woodstoves or fireplaces are the only source of heat. Anyone whose sole source of heat is a wood-burning device must use an EPA-certified or pellet-fueled device that is registered with the Air District to qualify for an exemption. An open-hearth fireplace no longer qualifies for an exemption.

Like cigarette smoke, wood smoke contains fine particles and carcinogenic substances that make the air harmful to breathe inside and outside the home. Wood smoke is the major source of air pollution in the Bay Area in the wintertime and is especially harmful to children, the elderly, and people with respiratory conditions.

First-time violators will be given the option of taking a wood smoke awareness class, online or by mail, to learn about the hazards of wood smoke pollution in lieu of paying a \$100 ticket. Second violations will result in a \$500 ticket, and subsequent ticket amounts will be higher.

The public must check before they burn during the Winter Spare the Air season, which runs from November 1 through February 28. The daily burn status can be found:

- **Via text alerts. To sign up, text the word “START” to the number 817-57**
- On the Air District Web sites: [www.baaqmd.gov](http://www.baaqmd.gov) or [www.sparetheair.org](http://www.sparetheair.org)
- Via the toll-free hotline 1-877-4-NO-BURN (complaints can also be filed via the hotline)
- By signing up for AirAlerts at [www.sparetheair.org](http://www.sparetheair.org) or phone alerts at 1-800-430-1515
- Via the Spare the Air iPhone and Android Apps

In the winter, wood smoke from the 1.4 million fireplaces and wood stoves in the Bay Area is the single largest source of air pollution, contributing about one-third of the harmful fine particulate pollution in the air. One fireplace burning can pollute an entire neighborhood. Exposure to wood smoke—like cigarette smoke—has been linked to serious respiratory illnesses and even increased risk of heart attacks. Breathing fine particulate accounts for more than 90 percent of premature deaths related to air pollution.

The [Bay Area Air Quality Management District](#) is the regional agency responsible for protecting air quality in the nine-county Bay Area. Connect with the Air District via [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and [YouTube](#). For more information about Spare the Air, visit [www.sparetheair.org](http://www.sparetheair.org).

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*Air District Communications Office*  
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